

Expanding upon the documentary project of *In Plain English* (1992), Julia Lesage served as lead author on a collaborative publication entitled *Making a Difference: University Students of Color Speak Out* (Boston: Rowman and Littlefield, June 2002). In the following essay Lesage reflects upon the processes and procedures of activist videomaking, tracing the history of the original project in light of the subsequent book.

Lesage's reflections on her documentary practice suggest the complexity of ethical issues and the variety of practical solutions available to the careful and committed video ethnographer. As a media professor Lesage draws from sociological theory and ethnic studies to situate the anthropological risks of representing subjects within a broader field of political relations and social contexts. At the same time, as a media practitioner Lesage offers techniques for getting the job done despite the deliberative tensions encountered in critical collaboration.

Lesage's frank discussion of her engaged politics and editorial decisions should not be understood to discredit the "objectivity" of her work. Rather, her honest and self-critical reflections complicate and question the assumptions behind such standards. Like the student subjects whose voices and stories *In Plain English* seeks to honor and acknowledge, Lesage understands that dominant cultural narratives frequently maintain their legitimacy under the guise of political neutrality. Offering an account of the conditions, intentions, and challenges of her particular practice, Lesage affords us a more critical perspective of the ways documentary discourses represent (and in a Foucauldian sense, produce) "truths" of the social world.

xxx